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SUBJECT: ROMANIA ON UNGA THIRD COMMITTEE RESOLUTIONS

REF: STATE 145641

11. (SBU) SUMMARY: Romania is on board with most of the U.S. agenda for the Third Committee, but cautions that there are some developing EU positions on some of the thematic resolutions which may require greater USG flexibility, including on the resolutions on Religious Tolerance/Defamation of Religion and the Death Penalty. Romania also appealed to the USG to allow time for the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) to be more constructive. End Summary.

12. (SBU) Poloff discussed the U.S. priorities for the UNGA Third Committee (reftel) on October 23 with MFA Director for Human Rights, Council of Europe and OSCE Brandusa Predescu (who will attend the Third Committee). Predescu noted that in general Romania was on board with most of the U.S. agenda, and would be working within the EU to press for member states' support for specific issues, including those on "no action" motions and retaliatory resolutions, as well as on the country specific resolutions, and on the thematic resolutions such as Condemning Rape as an Instrument of State Policy and on UN elections. She said that the remaining resolutions, on religious tolerance, on defamation of religion, and on the death penalty, required more nuanced understanding and flexibility from the USG. Predescu also specifically requested that the USG give the UN Human Rights Council a chance to evolve and to develop its secretariat. She added that the U.S. as a model democracy and champion of human rights should reconsider joining the HRC in order to provide the necessary ingredients to make it work.

13. (SBU) On "No Action" Motions and Retaliatory Resolutions: Predescu affirmed that the GOR takes a "principled position" in favor of the U.S. position, and will share this within the EU. She said Romania is opposed to these types of motions and resolutions "irrespective of the context."

14. (SBU) On Country-Specific Resolutions: Predescu said that the discussion on formalizing a common position continues in the EU. The GOR has no problems supporting the U.S. positions, and in fact favors EU co-authorship of the resolutions on Iran and Belarus. Predescu also noted that not only does the GOR share U.S. concerns, but also that the points raised were consistent with previous positions put forward in the HRC-Geneva (NOTE: Romania chairs the HRC). Predescu added that it would be especially appreciated if the U.S. were to take a "constructive attitude" when the HRC report is introduced at UNGA Third Committee, and not attempt to reopen discussion on issues that were already finalized in Geneva. She said it is vital that the HRC receives a formal endorsement by the UNGA, otherwise progress will be lost, not simply suspended.

15. (SBU) On the Resolution Condemning Rape as an Instrument of State Policy: Predescu confirmed that the GOR instructed its delegations in Geneva, New York, and Brussels to support the U.S. position. The GOR was also pressing the EU to be flexible and supportive especially in light of the fact that some member states were trying to make linkages to positions that may be difficult for the U.S. (i.e., CEDAW). She said that Romania was pressing for EU consensus on co-authorship, and urged the USG to engage constructively with the EU to develop a draft in cooperation with EU partners.

16. (SBU) On the UN Elections Program: Predescu noted that the GOR along with the other EU members would co-author this resolution .

17. (SBU) On Religious Tolerance and Defamation of Religion: Predescu noted that these two issues were linked, and that the EU had not yet reached a decision on putting forward a resolution on Religious Tolerance under the expectation that the OIC would/should give up its resolution on Defamation of Religion. She noted that this was an instance where there was a need to consider these issues both in the Third Committee and the HRC, and appealed to the USG to reconsider its general attitude towards the HRC for the sake of not only the WEOG, but also for the Eastern European Group of States. She noted that there was a fundamental mistrust among the different groups on this issue and that like-minded states need the "positive and constructive" weight of the USG to counterbalance "the other camp" which currently is winning the propaganda campaign.

18. (SBU) On the EU Death Penalty Resolution: Predescu said that the GOR was a strong supporter of the proposed EU resolution calling for a moratorium on the death penalty.

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She described the GOR position as "dispassionate" to distance the GOR from more vocally vehement voices against the death penalty within the EU. She also noted that the EU was taking a "graduated approach" aimed at abolishing the death penalty worldwide. The EU strategy would be designed to take into consideration differences in culture and attitude. Predescu said bluntly, "we have the votes" and that it would be sad if the U.S. was on the wrong side on this one. She appealed to the USG to abstain rather than vote no, because the EU would be "relentless" in its strategy to move towards an multi-regional, institutional dialogue for a worldwide moratorium on the death penalty.

19. (SBU) Comment: Our demarche and discussion were friendly and in the spirit of the close U.S.-Romanian strategic partnership. The differences in the U.S. and Romanian positions reflect an attempt to build a bridge between the U.S. and the EU on those issues. End Comment.

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